United Nations A/AC.109/2016/14

General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 February 2016

Original: English

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Tokelau

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 20 January 2016. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

16-02364 (E) 030316

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The Territory at a glance

Territory: Tokelau is a Non-Self-Governing Territory, as defined under the Charter of the United Nations, administered by New Zealand.

Representative of administering Power: Administrator Jonathan Kings

Geography: Tokelau comprises three small atolls: Fakaofo, Nukunonu and Atafu. Each atoll comprises strips of land up to 200 m wide and not more than 5 m above sea level. Samoa, located 480 km to the south, is the nearest sizeable neighbour and the principal point of contact for Tokelau with the outside world. Access is possible only by ship, with an average of 30 hours' sailing from Samoa. There is no air service.

Land area: 12.2 km²

Exclusive economic zone: 318,990 km²

Population: 1,411 (October 2011 census), as follows: Atafu — 482, Fakaofo — 490, Nukunonu — 397 and Samoa — 42 (Tokelau Public Service employees and their immediate families). There are 7,176 Tokelauans living in New Zealand (2013 census). As New Zealand citizens, Tokelauans may also reside in Australia.

Life expectancy at birth: 69.1 years (women: 70.4 years; men: 67.8 years (2000-2009 estimates))

Ethnic composition: Tokelauans are Polynesians with linguistic, familial and cultural links with Samoa.

Languages: Tokelauan. English and Samoan are also widely used.

Capital: None. Each atoll has its own administrative centre.

Head of territorial Government: Ulu-o-Tokelau. The position rotates annually among the leaders of each atoll.

Main political parties: None

Elections: Held in January every third year. The most recent election was held on 23 January 2014; the next is due to be held in January 2017. In terms of representation in the General Fono (the national representative body), Atafu has seven delegates, Nukunonu has six and Fakaofo has seven.

Legislature: The unicameral General Fono, a 20-member legislature

Economy: The principal source of revenue is assistance provided by New Zealand through budgetary support. The other major source of funding is fees from fisheries licences, with other small revenue streams from postage stamps and commemorative coins.

Monetary unit: New Zealand dollar ($NZ)

Gross domestic product per capita: US$ 1,007 (2001-2008 estimates)

Brief history: Originally inhabited by Polynesians from surrounding islands, Tokelau became a British protectorate in 1889, and in 1925, administration was transferred to New Zealand. By the Tokelau Act 1948, sovereignty over Tokelau was transferred to New Zealand.

I. Constitutional and political developments

A. Local self-governance

1. As previously reported, the current process of constitutional development stems from the 1998 decision of the General Fono (the national representative body) to endorse a comprehensive report entitled "Modern house of Tokelau", which addressed the core issue that faced Tokelau in creating a constitutional framework that suited an atoll- or village-based self-governing community that respected traditional decision-making customs.

2. In accordance with the terms of that report, General Fono delegates are now elected on the basis of proportional village representation, with a system of universal village suffrage rather than of equal village representation with delegates appointed by the respective village councils (taupulega), as was previously the case. In 2004, further decisions were made on the method of appointment of the Chair of the General Fono and on the role and responsibilities of the six-person Council for the Ongoing Government, which is the executive Government when the General Fono is not in session. The Council consists of three faipule (representative of each village) and one General Fono delegate from each village, designated by the taupulega. The position of Ulu-o-Tokelau, or Head of Government, rotates annually among the three faipule. In February 2015, the Faipule of Nukunonu took over as Ulu-o-Tokelau. In February 2016, the Faipule of Fakaofo is expected to rotate into the position.

3. In its most recent election, on 23 January 2014, Tokelau elected its new General Fono, which represents the three atolls (Fakaofo, Atafu and Nukunonu). It was the first time that the election had been based on common national basic criteria in all three villages. Two of the three sitting faipule and one of the three pulenuku (village mayors) lost their seats. In all, 9 of the 20 positions in the General Fono went to new candidates. Three of the positions are held by women, who each represent the Fatupaepae (Women's Committee) on each atoll. Overall, the composition of the General Fono is that of a younger, less traditional Tokelau. Saili Peau (representative of Atafu on the Council for the Ongoing Government) was elected and currently serves as Minister for Education of Tokelau, the first female minister.

4. Since 2004, the three village councils have taken full responsibility for all village public services. That decision emanated from the Modern House of Tokelau approach, whereby the traditional Council of Elders on each atoll serves as the foundation for any future governance structure. Under that arrangement, the councils delegate authority to the General Fono for activities that need to be handled at the national level (see A/AC.109/2005/3). The New Zealand official with principal responsibility for relations with Tokelau is the Administrator of Tokelau, who is based in Wellington and is appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand.

5. Jonathan Kings is the current Administrator and works within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in the Special Relations Unit, which is responsible for the relationship of New Zealand with Tokelau (and with Niue). The Unit is staffed by officers of the Ministry. A member of the Tokelau Public Service works in the Office of the Administrator.

B. Referendum process

6. In 2003, the General Fono took a formal decision, with the support of all three village councils, to endorse self-government in free association with New Zealand as the choice to be actively explored with the Government of New Zealand. In August 2005, the General Fono approved a draft constitution, as the basis for the proposed act of self-determination, and the text of a draft treaty of free association. In November 2005, the Cabinet of New Zealand gave its formal approval. The referendum package, consisting of the draft treaty and the draft constitution, was to form the basis of the referendum on self-determination. In line with a decision by the General Fono, an overall majority of two thirds of the valid votes cast was required for a change to the status of Tokelau.

7. The first referendum on self-determination was held sequentially in Apia and on the three atolls from 11 to 15 February 2006 (see A/AC.109/2006/20). The outcome fell short of the required two-thirds majority, with 60 per cent of valid Tokelauan votes cast in favour of self-government in free association with New Zealand. The United Nations, which formally monitored the referendum, deemed the process credible and reflective of the will of the people of Tokelau. A representative of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, accompanied by a Political Affairs Officer of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, also observed the referendum process.

8. In August 2006, the General Fono voted to hold a second referendum on Tokelauan self-determination in late 2007. The proposed constitution and the draft treaty, commonly referred to as the self-determination package, were to be the same and the legal threshold for acceptance of the proposal would remain at a two-thirds majority.

9. The second referendum was held from 20 to 24 October 2007. The result, with 64.4 per cent in favour, was again below the two-thirds threshold, thereby leaving the status of the Territory unchanged (see A/AC.109/2007/19). As with the first referendum, the United Nations formally monitored the voting, with representatives of the Special Committee and the Department of Political Affairs present as observers.

10. Following the results of the second referendum, the General Fono requested the Government of New Zealand to keep on the table the entire self-determination package (namely the draft treaty and draft constitution that had been agreed upon and had served as the foundation for the previous ballots). The Council for the Ongoing Government noted that Tokelau could in the future change the two-thirds majority threshold for the referendum, but should put in place measures to ensure that a threshold was supported by a clear majority in each village to guarantee unity. The Council also noted the Territory's strong commitment to self-determination and its wish to have a constitution, albeit one that did not encompass the provisions for free association and self-government.

11. The outcomes of the referendums, neither of which reached the threshold of support set by the General Fono for a change of status, have been acknowledged and accepted by New Zealand. As a follow-up to the result of the referendum held in 2007, the then Prime Minister of New Zealand met the leaders of Tokelau in

February 2008 to discuss the next steps in the New Zealand-Tokelau relationship. It was agreed that a "pause" should be taken in the self-determination efforts of Tokelau and that, in the meantime, Tokelau would focus on meeting its basic needs. That remains the situation.

II. Economic conditions

A. General economic overview

12. Tokelau faces major constraints to its economic growth, including such natural disadvantages as small size, isolation, wide spread of the atolls, lack of natural resources and natural disasters, such as cyclones. The economic stability of the Territory has to date been made possible by the high levels of assistance provided by the administering Power. With the continued assistance of New Zealand, the Council for the Ongoing Government intends to maintain its focus on improving the delivery of core public services as part of a current joint review process, completing key infrastructure projects, such as on shipping, schools, hospitals, renewable energy and improvements in health and education, and strengthening the Council and the Tokelau Public Service.

13. As part of the new fisheries policy aimed at maximizing the economic benefits from the sustainable use of its exclusive economic zone, Tokelau joined the Vessel Day Scheme, a mechanism allowing vessel owners to purchase and trade days fishing at sea in places subject to the Nauru Agreement concerning Cooperation in the Management of Fisheries of Common Interest. The scheme is used to sustainably manage catches of target tuna species and increase the rate of return from fishing activities through access fees paid by distant water fishing nations. At the request of Tokelau, and according to the administering Power, the Administrator is now responsible for the management of the Territory's exclusive economic zone. All the necessary formalities have been concluded in order for the Administrator to manage the zone for the foreseeable future, until Tokelau is in a position to assume that responsibility. In October 2015, the General Fono approved a fisheries reform paper, intended to further improve the administration and management of the Territory's offshore and inshore fisheries. Officials from Tokelau and New Zealand are currently working through the implications of the reforms.

14. In May 2014, the ninety-second meeting of officials of the Forum Fisheries Council of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency was, for the first time, held in Tokelau. It was followed by the tenth annual ministerial meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee of the Agency, in July 2014, also held in Tokelau for the first time since the Territory joined the Agency in 2002. Both meetings were the first regional meetings to be held in the Territory. At the ministerial meeting, the participants endorsed a roadmap, the Atafu Declaration, which culminated in the ministers signing the Tokelau Arrangement for the Management of the South Pacific Albacore Fishery in December 2014. On 30 November, Tokelau had become the first member of the Agency to sign the Arrangement, which provides a framework for the development of cooperative zone-based management of South Pacific albacore tuna fisheries.

15. Traditional and communal values and practices play a key role in contributing to a state of general well-being and equity in the Territory, as evidenced by the *inati*

system and the importance attached to upholding the concept of the family and/or the extended family. The tradition of *inati* requires the deposit at a central location of food and produce, which are then apportioned by the distributors on the basis of "share groups". The principle provides for a secure distribution system that addresses the needs of every member of the community, including older persons, widows, single parents and children.

B. Assistance to Tokelau by the administering Power

16. In 2011, New Zealand and Tokelau signed a joint commitment for development, which set out joint priorities for the following five years, in line with the National Strategic Plan for 2010-2015.

17. Assistance is provided through budget support and specific projects. New Zealand provides significant levels of assistance to Tokelau. In 2014/15, it provided $NZ 20.7 million in the areas of transport, education and budget support and $NZ 3.9 million through regional and partnership programmes. The major capital project for the period 2015-2018 has been a new passenger cargo ship, the *Mataliki*, for which New Zealand provided $NZ 12.5 million.

18. The Tokelau International Trust Fund, formally established in November 2004, was designed to provide intergenerational security and an independent source of income to Tokelau in the future. With contributions from Australia, New Zealand, Tokelau and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the level of the Fund in 2014 was some $NZ 80 million.

C. Transport and communications

19. Tokelau has no airstrips, and its main transportation option is provided by regular passenger and cargo services from Apia. Charters by larger vessels are occasionally funded to meet the Territory's transport needs. Recognizing that the quality of the transport service linking the atolls and providing contact with Samoa is vital to Tokelau, the Government of New Zealand has supported the construction of a new vessel that will carry up to 60 passengers and essential cargo. It arrived in Apia on 3 February 2016 and is expected to make its first trip to Tokelau in March 2016. New Zealand is also assisting in ensuring the safe and efficient transfer of passengers and cargo from ship to shore, including through the provision of new barges and safety equipment and training. New Zealand supports Tokelau in upgrading its wharf infrastructure.

20. According to the administering Power, Internet connectivity in Tokelau requires improvement to better support the Territory's isolation. There is no mobile phone network. The World Bank has recently completed a comprehensive assessment of telecommunications governance, management and infrastructure in Tokelau and recommended a programme of work to improve telecommunications. New Zealand is currently considering investment in information and communications technology, which is expected to have wide benefits, including for education, health, governance and economic development. Telecommunications services are provided through the Tokelau Telecommunication Corporation (Teletok). In December 2014, Teletok selected a telecommunications company to deliver satellite broadband connectivity across the Territory and surrounding waters.

D. Power supply

21. According to the administering Power, in 2012 Tokelau became the first area in the world to draw power primarily from solar sources, following the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project, jointly funded by the Governments of New Zealand and Tokelau. The initiative implemented a solar photovoltaic system of large solar arrays on the three atolls.

22. As a Pacific island highly affected by climate change, Tokelau considers that its lead role and initiative in renewable energy can serve as examples for the developed world. Tokelau has generated savings in diesel of around $NZ 1 million per year, with the solar photovoltaic system supplying more than 90 per cent of the Territory's electricity.

III. Social conditions

A. General

23. In May 2012, Statistics New Zealand and the Tokelau Statistics Unit released the final outcome of the five-yearly population census held on 18 October 2011. The main findings were detailed in the 2013 working paper (A/AC.109/2013/2). The results of the population count undertaken in December 2013 can be found in the 2014 working paper (A/AC.109/2014/2). Preparations are currently under way for the next census, to be held in October 2016.

B. Education

24. Under the Territory's compulsory education system, primary and secondary education is available to everyone up to year 13. There are three schools in Tokelau, one on each atoll. As an owner of the University of the South Pacific, Tokelau has access to a distance-learning foundation course run by the University's educational telecommunications system through the campus located on Atafu. Tokelau has since invested in telecommunications systems in campuses in Nukunonu and Fakaofo. According to the administering Power, notwithstanding the support for education over many years, education standards on the atolls remain relatively low, a fact that was confirmed in a report of the Education Review Office of New Zealand published in February 2014. That is a key reason why significant numbers of families leave the atolls to seek improved educational opportunities for their children in New Zealand, Samoa and elsewhere.

25. Consequently, with assistance from New Zealand, Tokelau is currently embarking on a major initiative to transform primary and early childhood education. The investment of $NZ 5 million, over the course of five years, is expected to strengthen school governance and leadership, support the professional development of teachers and principals and improve learning outcomes for students. Early indications are that there have been significant improvements in literacy and numeracy outcomes. In the long term, it is expected that New Zealand will support distance education for Tokelau. The Territory, with funding from New Zealand, has recently built new schools on Atafu and Fakaofo. A new school building is being constructed on Nukunonu. The Government of Tokelau announced in December

2014 that the Centre for Educational Development of Massey University, New Zealand, had been contracted to work with the Government and villages of Tokelau on improvements to education services.

C. Health care

26. The provision of adequate health services on three dispersed atolls remains a major challenge, but a new health centre on Nukunonu is making a strong contribution to improved health outcomes. A second health centre is being built on Fakaofo.

27. The major non-local sources of contributions to health care are the Government of New Zealand, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Pacific Community. The priorities of the Territory's health plan, which is directly linked to the National Strategic Plan for 2010-2015, are healthy islands and communities; healthy lifestyles; the development of health partnerships; the development of accessible primary health-care services; successful community participation; and the development and improvement of the health system.

28. According to data compiled by WHO in 2013, non-communicable disease risk factors, namely overweight and obesity, are the major health threats, with cerebrovascular and cardiovascular diseases the leading causes of death. The burden of disease owing to lifestyle-related factors is growing and becoming a significant problem. Obesity is common (74.7 per cent of the population) and attributed to diet and physical inactivity. There is an observable dietary shift away from local foods and towards imported foods. Tobacco and alcohol consumption are relatively high among adults and more prominent in males. The estimated smoking prevalence among adults in 2013 was 50 per cent. Tokelau has a draft national non-communicable disease roadmap for the coming three years that is intended to address the crisis and guide related activities in Tokelau. It also has a draft tobacco control policy, devised through consultations. There are initiatives under way to improve education regarding diet and nutrition. Appropriate tools and protocols are in place for early detection of non-communicable diseases and risk factors in all hospitals so that patients receive early support and management, thereby reducing the risk of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases. According to the administering Power, however, significant changes have yet to result. Continuous training, recruitment and retention of health-care professionals are necessary to address those growing problems and are significant challenges. In May 2015, Tokelau was recognized in the best practice category by WHO as part of its "Healthy Islands" initiative. The Territory was selected for a policy initiative of the Department of Health that demonstrated strong community leadership and action to prevent the importation of fizzy drinks.

29. Tokelau has reviewed its health sector, with the recommendations made currently under consideration by the Governments of New Zealand and Tokelau. In the review, Tokelau noted that the tripartite nature of its health governance and management structure constrained the effective delivery of health services owing to service fragmentation and low levels of clinical cooperation across the atolls. It recommended a centralization of services, with the provision for health specialists

who would work nationally through the new hospital on Nukunonu and under the Department of Health (rather than the village taupulega). It also recommended placing greater emphasis on promoting good health and improving the capacity of the public health sector to manage the threats posed by non-communicable diseases.

30. Tokelau has zero infant and maternal mortality owing to early referral of mothers for maternity care. Antenatal care coverage and coverage for child immunization is 100 per cent. Tokelau has introduced the inactivated polio vaccine to replace the oral polio vaccine to address global concerns about the latter. Discussions are under way to introduce the human papillomavirus vaccine for females between 13 and 18 years of age in order to reduce risk of cervical cancer. Discussions are also under way to introduce screening using visual inspection with acetic acid for cervical assessments and treatment. The proportion of the population with access to improved sanitation facilities is 93 per cent and to improved drinking water sources is 97 per cent. Tokelau has benefited from a project under the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Programme for a more reliable and safe water system. The project, supported by UNDP and implemented by the secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, aimed at improving access to clean water and installed first flush diverters on drinking water tanks in 99 per cent of households on all three atolls. The project also raised community awareness of water and sanitation issues and renovated or replaced water infrastructure such as pipes, guttering and water tanks.

IV. External relations

31. As set out in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Joint Statement of the Principles of Partnership between Tokelau and New Zealand, Tokelau, as a Non-Self-Governing Territory, does not have an international legal personality separate from that of New Zealand that would allow it to enter into formal international legal obligations as a State in its own right. In consultation with Tokelau, New Zealand is responsible for entering into any such obligations on behalf of Tokelau. Tokelau participates in regional and international organizations in its own right to the extent that such organizations allow.

32. Tokelau is seeking to increase its engagement with regional and international organizations. It is a member of the Pacific Community, the Pacific Community Coastal Fisheries Programme, the Council of the University of the South Pacific, the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. At the forty-fifth Pacific Islands Forum, held in Koror, Palau, from 29 to 31 July 2014, the participants agreed to admit Tokelau as an associate member. Tokelau is an associate member of the Pacific Community Applied Geoscience Commission and of WHO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Polynesian Leaders Group, of which Tokelau is currently the Chair. In addition to its relationship with New Zealand, Samoa is an important bilateral contact for Tokelau. Tokelau hosted the ninety-second meeting of officials of the Forum Fisheries Council of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency in May 2014 and the tenth annual ministerial meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee of the Agency in July 2014 (see para. 14). Tokelau continues to seek the support of New Zealand in gaining access to the Green Climate Fund and other adaptation and mitigation facilities.

V. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

33. Speaking at the 5th meeting of the Special Committee, on 23 June 2015, the Ulu-o-Tokelau highlighted work on institutional reforms to adapt Tokelau to its future aspirations while retaining the principles of the "Tokelau way". He reiterated that there was a need for meaningful partnerships to tackle issues such as climate change, renewable energy and sustainable development. He pointed out that the decolonization process and efforts to address those issues were not parallel, but one and the same for Tokelau. Joining the Pacific Islands Forum, participating in the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States and hosting the tenth annual ministerial meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency in 2014 had been bold moves by Tokelau towards meaningful partnerships in order to further engage in advocacy regarding issues of climate change and related challenges for small island atoll nations.

34. He recalled that the National Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 was in the final year of implementation and that Tokelau was working on a longer-term plan, covering the period 2015-2030, which comprised three strategies, each of five years' duration. Work to launch the new plan and complete outstanding work from the National Strategic Plan would be conducted under an interim plan, covering the period 2015/16. The Territory's development framework would focus on improving the quality of life in villages thanks to better service delivery through improved governance, management systems and processes. Tokelau was committed to achieving better education and health outcomes by improving service delivery and management at all levels. That required institutional strengthening, focusing on governance structures, fiscal integrity and improved infrastructure in terms of schools, hospitals, transport and telecommunications and, more importantly, the application and practice of good governance in all those structures, management systems and processes.

35. He expressed concern about the impacts of climate change, which were already being felt in Tokelau. The reality of climate change was visible in the changes to the coastal environment, rising temperatures and acidification of lagoons, affecting food security. The effects on the lives of the people were overwhelming, yet they had been given to understand that there was no place for them to participate in international discussions thereon.

36. He also noted that the Territory had no specific decolonization agenda or timetable. It was fair to say that, while self-determination was not an immediate priority, it was an ultimate goal, which New Zealand respected and supported without bringing any pressure to bear. Nonetheless, the work to build robust infrastructure and clear structures, systems and procedures within village and national institutions to support good governance was pivotal for the development resilience and self-reliance of the people. Tokelau had made great progress towards meeting the aspirations of its people for a reliable and brighter future with the generous and conscientious support of the administering Power. He looked forward to the continued support of the Special Committee and the United Nations.

37. In June 2013, the Ulu-o-Tokelau informed the Special Committee that the national symbol, constitution, national anthem and national flag had been approved and ratified through efforts led by the people of Tokelau (see A/AC.109/2014/2).

B. Position of the administering Power

38. Addressing the Special Committee at its 5th meeting, on 23 June 2015, Nicola Ngawati, speaking on behalf of the Administrator of Tokelau, said that the relationship between New Zealand and Tokelau remained extremely positive. The challenges that the Territory continued to face (isolation and a small population) were unlikely to change, given its position as one of the most geographically isolated communities in the world. The administering Power's commitment to the constitutional relationship with the Government and people of Tokelau had been reinforced, together with the focus on ensuring that all those living on the three atolls were receiving appropriate essential services. In response to the concerns about the quantum of funding from New Zealand, the Government's priorities continued to be ensuring that all inhabitants received appropriate essential services and improving the quality of life. New Zealand and Tokelau were working together to develop a plan to address identified weaknesses in that regard.

39. She provided updated information on the delivery of the new, purpose-built ship to service Tokelau (expected in January 2016), for which New Zealand had incurred a total cost of $NZ 12.5 million. She indicated that the vessel was to be gifted to Tokelau and serviced by a professional ship management company to ensure the safety of the people of Tokelau and the safe operation of the vessel.

40. She said that her Government's efforts were centred on improving education and health-care delivery, notwithstanding the shortage of skills and the difficulties faced with regard to the recruitment and retention of health-care professionals. New Zealand was supporting Tokelau through a jointly managed process to transform the delivery of education. It was providing technical support in schools and to the Department of Education. In parallel, Tokelau had committed itself to increasing its budgetary allocations to education over time.

41. She noted that New Zealand was continuing its work with Tokelau to maximize the revenue that the Territory could generate from its own resources, in particular fisheries (the largest earner). Revenue from fisheries had reached $NZ 10.75 million in 2014/15. At the request of Tokelau, the Administrator was continuing to manage the Territory's exclusive economic zone, in conjunction with Tokelau and with the assistance of the Ministry for Primary Industries of New Zealand.

42. She also noted that the focus remained on providing core services for Tokelau before any further act of self-determination were to be considered. There was no active push for change to the status quo. New Zealand was continuing to provide significant assistance to and remained committed to the long-term development of the Territory.

43. She noted that New Zealand continued to value its close association with Tokelau and was resolute in supporting such remote communities of New Zealand citizens.

VI. Consideration by the United Nations

A. Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

44. The Special Committee considered the question of Tokelau at its 5th meeting, on 23 June 2015. The representatives of Sierra Leone and New Zealand made statements. The representative of Papua New Guinea, also on behalf of Fiji, introduced draft resolution A/AC.109/2015/L.15, which the Special Committee adopted without a vote (see A/AC.109/2015/SR.5).

B. Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

45. At its 7th meeting, on 15 October 2015, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted without a vote draft resolution VI (see A/70/23, chap. XIII) on the question of Tokelau.

C. Action taken by the General Assembly

46. At its 70th plenary meeting, on 9 December 2015, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 70/101 on the question of Tokelau. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Acknowledged the decision of the General Fono in 2008 that consideration of any future act of self-determination by Tokelau would be deferred and that New Zealand and Tokelau would devote renewed effort and attention to ensuring that essential services and infrastructure on the atolls of Tokelau were enhanced and strengthened, thereby ensuring an enhanced quality of life and opportunities for the people of Tokelau;

(b) Welcomed the progress made towards the devolution of power to the three taupulega (village councils) since 2004, and noted that further discussion was planned on the recommendations in the report on the devolution review, compiled in 2012;

(c) Noted with appreciation that Tokelau and New Zealand remained firmly committed to the ongoing development of Tokelau for the long-term benefit of the people of Tokelau, with particular emphasis on the further development of facilities on each atoll that would meet their current requirements;

(d) Recalled the adoption by Tokelau of its National Strategic Plan for 2010 2015 and that the Joint Commitment for Development between Tokelau and New Zealand 2011-2015 prioritized four main development pillars, including good governance, infrastructure development, human resources capacity development and sustainable development;

(e) Acknowledged the ongoing and consistent commitment of New Zealand to meeting the social and economic requirements of the people of Tokelau,

including with the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project and a new shipping charter service, as well as the support and cooperation of UNDP and WHO;

(f) Commended the achievement by Tokelau in 2013 of 60 per cent of the objectives of its National Strategic Plan, including the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project with the support of the administering Power and receipt by the Government of the Renewable Energy Award granted by the New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority;

(g) Acknowledged the need of Tokelau for continued support from the international community and its desire to become part of the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, the impacts of climate change and the protection of the environment and oceans;

(h) Noted the intention of Tokelau to further review its National Strategic Plan in order to determine development and other priorities beyond 2015 and to include consideration of the issue of self-determination and how the Territory would address a possible referendum on self-determination in cooperation with the administering Power;

(i) Recalled with satisfaction the establishment and operation of the Tokelau International Trust Fund to support the ongoing needs of Tokelau, and called upon Member States and international and regional agencies to contribute to the Fund and thereby lend practical support to Tokelau in overcoming the problems of smallness, isolation and lack of resources;

(j) Welcomed the cooperative attitude of the other States and territories in the region towards Tokelau and their support for its economic and political aspirations and its increasing participation in regional and international affairs, and in that regard noted the successful chairmanship by Tokelau in 2014 of the tenth annual ministerial meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, held in Tokelau on 1 and 2 July 2014, and the representation of the Agency by the Ulu-o-Tokelau at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Apia from 1 to 4 September 2014;

(k) Called upon the administering Power and United Nations agencies to continue to provide assistance to Tokelau as it further developed;

(l) Recognized the positive actions taken by the administering Power to transmit to the Secretary-General under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations information regarding the political, economic and social situation of Tokelau;

(m) Commended the commitment of both Tokelau and New Zealand to continuing to work together in the interests of Tokelau and its people;

(n) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of Tokelau and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session.

47. At its 82nd plenary meeting, on 23 December 2015, the General Assembly also adopted resolution 70/231 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, paragraph 7 of which refers to Tokelau.